

March 17, 2008

E-19J

Mark E. Van Every
District Ranger
Kawishiwi Ranger District
Superior National Forest
1393 Highway 169
Ely, MN 55731

Re: U.S. EPA Comments on the Glacier Project, Superior National Forest, Minnesota
Draft Environmental Impact Statement – EIS No. 20080031

Dear Mr. Van Every:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the U.S. Forest Service's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Glacier Project on the Kawishiwi Ranger District in the Superior National Forest (Forest). Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

In 2004, the Forest adopted a new Forest Plan, which provides general guidance regarding the management of National Forest lands. The Forest Plan divides the Forest into different Management Areas (MAs), each having particular objectives and a desired condition. According to the Draft EIS, the current vegetation component in the Glacier Project Area does not meet Forest Plan desired conditions for species composition, age class, tree species diversity, and management indicator habitats for landscape ecosystems. Differences between the existing and desired conditions were used to develop the purpose and need for the proposed project.

The Draft EIS documents the analysis of three alternatives. The alternatives differ by the amounts and types of vegetation management, proximity of management activities to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, degree of potential impact to lynx, and miles of road to be constructed. A preferred alternative was not designated in the Draft EIS.

Based on our review, we have assigned a rating of **LO (Lack of Objections)** to the Draft EIS. We understand the two action alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS support the management direction for the Glacier Project Area outlined in the 2004 Forest Plan. A summary of the rating system used in the evaluation of this EIS is enclosed for your reference.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft EIS. We request the FEIS include rationale explaining why the alternative selected by the District Ranger after reviewing comments to the Draft EIS is the best approach to manage resources in the Glacier Project Area.

Please send one copy of future NEPA correspondence for this project to our offices when it is finalized. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Kathleen Kowal of my staff at (312) 353-5206 or via email at kowal.kathleen@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kenneth A. Westlake 3/17/08

Kenneth A. Westlake, Supervisor
NEPA Implementation
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Enclosure - Summary of Rating Definitions